

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ACDA/MA/IR:ARTURRENTINE
APPROVED BY EUR:JGOODBY
PM/DCA:LBRECKON
EUR/WE:JDOBBINS
EUR/RPM:SLEDOGAR
DOD/ISA:JLEONARD
ACDA/MA/IR:CCFLOWERREE
ACDA/MA/AT:RMIKULAK
ACDA/D:ASFISHER :S/S0 LRFLEISCHER
NSC:LDENEND

-----081883 071909Z /46

P R 071615Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 291717

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, FR

SUBJECT: CHEMICAL WEAPONS: CONSULTATIONS ON VERIFICATION

REF: PARIS 31997

1. DURING NOVEMBER 2 US-FRENCH CONSULTATIONS ON CHEMICAL
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WEAPONS (CW), CHIEF OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY'S
SERVICE OF PACTS AND DISARMAMENT (DE LA FERRIERE) MADE A
PROPOSAL WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "PERSONAL" BUT OBVIOUSLY
HAD OFFICIAL INSPIRATION THAT APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS FROM
US, UK, FRG, AND FRANCE MEET TO DISCUSS CW VERIFICATION
ISSUES IN DETAIL. AFTER REFLECTING ON THIS PROPOSAL, WE
HAVE CONCLUDED THAT SUCH DISCUSSIONS COULD BE USEFUL, BOTH

IN TERMS OF ENGAGING THE FRENCH FURTHER IN A CONSTRUCTIVE DISARMAMENT DIALOGUE AND IN TERMS OF TESTING THE US NEGOTIATING POSITION ON VERIFICATION. WE WOULD NOT INTEND FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS TO DETRACT IN ANY WAY FROM THE CONTINUING DISARMAMENT CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL NATO ALLIES BOTH IN BRUSSELS AND IN GENEVA. WE WOULD EXPECT, THEREFORE, THAT THE EXISTENCE AS WELL AS THE CONTENT OF THESE CONSULTATIONS WOULD BE KEPT ENTIRELY CONFIDENTIAL.

2. WE WOULD LIKE FIRST TO EXPLORE THE PROPOSAL FURTHER WITH DE LA FERRIERE ON AN INFORMAL BASIS TO ESTABLISH A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING ON THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION, PLACE, TIMING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND AGENDA FOR SUCH A MEETING. AFTER REACHING A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FRENCH, WE MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THE FRENCH FOLLOW UP WITH THE BRITISH AND THE GERMANS TO COMPLETE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A MEETING. FROM PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BRITISH AND GERMANS DURING EARLIER CONSULTATIONS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT BOTH WOULD WELCOME TALKS ON CW WITH THE FRENCH AS WELL AS OURSELVES.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT DURING THE EXPLORATORY PHASE IT WOULD BE BEST IF THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION REMAINS ROUGHLY AT THE SAME LEVEL AS IN PREVIOUS US-FRENCH BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS (I.E. US ALTERNATE HEAD OF CW DELEGATION) WITH PARTICIPATION OF VARIOUS EXPERTS (MILITARY, TECHNICAL, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND PERHAPS INTELLIGENCE). LATER ON, IF FRENCH SUGGEST THAT PARTICIPATION BE MORE SENIOR, THE US SIDE WOULD BE PREPARED FOR AMBASSADOR ADRIAN FISHER (HEAD OF CW DELEGATION AND US REPRESENTATIVE TO CCD) TO TAKE PART.

4. WITH RESPECT TO THE TIMING OF CONSULTATIONS WE WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO HOLD IT UNTIL EARLY NEXT YEAR. SINCE THE NEXT ROUND OF US-USSR BILATERALS ON CW IS SCHEDULED TO START ON JANUARY 10 IN GENEVA, IT DOES NOT APPEAR FEASIBLE TO HOLD THE MEETING IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO START OF BILATERALS. THEREFORE, WE WOULD PROPOSE HOLDING THE MEETING EITHER IN GENEVA, PARIS, LONDON OR BONN. WE BELIEVE THAT ONE DAY WOULD BE ADEQUATE AND WOULD PROPOSE ANY DAY FROM JANUARY 11-27 IF MEETING IS TO BE IN GENEVA. IF MEETING IS TO BE HELD IN ANOTHER CITY, WE WOULD PREFER HOLDING IT ON A FRIDAY OR MONDAY (JANUARY 13, 16, 20, 23 OR 27) TO MINIMIZE THE ABSENCE OF US DEL FROM THE US-USSR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE CW AGENDA, WE WOULD PREFER TO FOCUS THE DISCUSSION ON VERIFICATION ISSUES INCLUDING CHALLENGE ON-SITE INSPECTIONS, THE FUNCTION OF THE

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, VERIFICATION OF THE DESTRUCTION
OF STOCKS, VERIFICATION OF DISPOSITION OF FACILITIES,
AND AGREED ON-SITE INSPECTION OF FACILITIES PERMITTED
TO HANDLE OR PRODUCE SUPER-TOXIC CHEMICALS. WE WOULD
ALSO BE PREPARED TO INCLUDE ANYRELATED ISSUES THAT
FRENCH OR OTHERS MIGHT WISH TO RAISE

6. EMBASSY PARIS SHOULD APPROACH DE LA FERRIERE INFORMALLY,
DRAWING ON THE FOREGOING, TO DETERMINE IF HE WISHES
TO PURSUE THE MATTER ALONG THE LINES WE HAVE
SUGGESTED. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, CHEMICALS, MEETINGS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE291717
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARTURRENTINE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770455-0111
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771282/aaaacrjf.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ff899009-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 PARIS 31997
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 325041
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHEMICAL WEAPONS: CONSULTATIONS ON VERIFICATION
TAGS: PARM, FR, US
To: PARIS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ff899009-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009